



BOBBY JINDAL, Governor

Office of Juvenile Justice

MARY L. LIVERS, Ph.D., MSW, Deputy Secretary

February 3, 2012

Open Letter to All OJJ Employees

Dear OJJ Colleagues:

As you know, I like to begin a new year with a look at the year gone by – what we accomplished - and an outline for what we can expect in the coming year ahead. It is an opportunity to reflect on our personal accomplishments as well as our collective accomplishments as an agency. I am very pleased to share with you some of our 2011 successes.

We now have hard data that prove that OJJ as an agency is moving in the right direction. We have implemented best practices and they are working for our youth. We will continue in the same direction as we face yet another fiscal year that will surely bring yet another reduction in our budget. However, we have proven that whatever resources we are provided, we use wisely and strategically, with quality results. I think it is safe to say that the size of our budget and the number of our staff do not define the effectiveness of our agency.

When OJJ embarked upon the path toward systemic reform of the juvenile justice system, back in the early years of this decade, the stated goal was better outcomes for our youth, with more youth receiving services in their communities and less reliance on secure care. True reform seemed to be a lofty and unattainable goal. Today, our data – as well as significantly decreased demand for out of home placements - clearly show that we are accomplishing our goals, while at the same time enduring and working through the challenges.

While implementation of best practices and innovative programming is at the core of our success, we have our staff to thank. You are the people who provide the services, who implement the practices and programs. You are OJJ.

Accomplishments

Recidivism Rate

The recidivism rate is one of the primary tools used in measuring the success of programs within the juvenile justice system. The 2011 report shows an overall decrease in recidivism as compared to 2010. The 2011 rates show an overall decrease in one-year recidivism by 2.2 percent compared to last year (from 15.3% to 13.1%). This means we have fewer youth reoffending after release from OJJ care.

The 2011 analysis indicates a .7% decrease (from 17.60% to 16.90%) in the one year rate for secure care, which we attribute to implementation of the therapeutic model in our facilities. The non-secure rate for one year after discharge decreased by 2% (21% to 19%) from the last

reporting period. And the one year rate for supervision youth decreased by 2.5% (from 13.6% to 11.1%). It is a tremendous accomplishment that OJJ's overall recidivism rate now stands at 13.1% percent and that all 3 classifications – secure, non-secure and supervision have decreased.

The steady decrease in recidivism is attributed to the reform efforts of Louisiana's juvenile justice system, which allows appropriate placement and treatment for the youth we serve. OJJ's implementation of the Structured Assessment for Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY) instrument identifies targeted need areas that are incorporated into the youth's treatment plan. The SAVRY also identifies the youth's risk level, allowing for appropriate placement within OJJ's continuum of care. Additionally, Service Coordination has provided consistency and individual management and oversight of the youth's cases. We attribute these positive numbers to effective programming both in our secure care facilities and in community-based services.

Improved Quality of Contract Services

CQIS staff conducted extensive research on evidence-based and best practices regarding OJJ's various contract services to youth. These findings, along with the *Principles of Effective Intervention* were incorporated into the agency's RFPs for contract services including residential, foster care, mentor, tracker, day treatment, transitional living, and psychiatric evaluations.

The evidence-based Correctional Program Checklist (CPC) is a tool developed to assess correctional intervention programs and ascertain how closely they meet known principles of effective intervention, which are proven to reduce recidivism. In 2011, CQIS completed the CPC Evaluation on all contract treatment providers. Teleconferences were held with many providers to answer questions about the process. A final report of findings was distributed to each provider, who in turn, submitted corrective action plans to gain improvement/compliance with the requirements of the CPC.

In order to effectively track the progress of providers in CPC scores, as well as to identify areas where the agency may need to focus attention or provide technical assistance to providers, a database was created to track the CPC scores and management results. CQIS staff worked with IT staff on the database design, which automatically calculates totals and allows for trending and reporting.

Health Services

Correct Care Solutions (CCS), a national leader in the provision of day-to-day health care programs in the correctional healthcare field, began providing services at Swanson Center for Youth in July 2011. OJJ has completely transitioned from paper medical records to electronic health records, currently in use by CCS at all three facilities.

PREA

OJJ was awarded a Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) grant from the U.S. Department of Justice for \$750,000. Only 1/3 of the grant recipients were juvenile justice agencies. With funds provided by the grant, OJJ will work to evaluate and improve policies and institutional culture regarding PREA issues.

Mental Health Training

A Comprehensive Mental Health Training was conducted for Office of Juvenile Justice staff using a “train the trainers” model. National experts taught the curriculum, which will in turn be taught system-wide to OJJ staff.

Training Curriculum for LGBTQ Youth in Out-of-Home Care

OJJ staff were trained in “Moving the Margins,” a curriculum for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth in Out-of-Home Care. This train-the-trainer manual provides training on building the capacity, awareness and skills of child welfare practitioners to better serve and respond to the needs of LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care. All facilities received their first training in 2011.

Accreditation

Swanson Center for Youth and Jetson Center for Youth were accredited by the American Correctional Association (ACA). OJJ’s Community-Based Services (Probation and Parole) unit was re-accredited this year by ACA.

Acadiana

OJJ secured a site for a new therapeutic secure care center at the southern outskirts of Bunkie, Avoyelles Parish. The state will construct, from the ground up, Louisiana’s first new, state-of-the-art therapeutic treatment center, to primarily serve youth in southern and central Louisiana.

OJJ and Technical College Partnership

OJJ partnered with North Shore Technical College and the MacArthur Foundation to establish a model whereby community and technical colleges will work with youth involved with the juvenile justice system. It creates an individual career pathway for each participating youth, who will receive career guidance, intensive case management and follow-up, education, job skills training, pre-employment services, as well as job placement services upon completion of their chosen academic program.

Parent Involvement

Parent listening group meetings were held quarterly at each facility. Parents meet with facility directors, treatment and education staff to discuss concerns and issues with regard to their children’s progress. In addition, OJJ facilities expanded family visitation schedules to include both Saturdays and Sundays.

Education in Secure Care Facilities

OJJ’s schools were re-approved as alternative schools under the new guidelines established by the Alternative Education Schools/Programs Standards. OJJ principals and teachers were trained in the new Core Standards Curriculum adopted in 2011 by the Louisiana State Department of Education.

GED Attainment in Secure Facilities

OJJ’s facilities saw a 19% increase in GED passage rate in 2011 compared to 2010. OJJ has a 53% passage rate for GED takers in our secure facilities.

Going Forward: 2012 Initiatives

Louisiana Behavioral Health Partnership and Coordinated System of Care (CSoC)

March 1, 2012, the Louisiana Behavioral Health Partnership and its smaller initiative, the Coordinated System of Care (CSoC) will go live. This initiative will pool resources and serve as a single point of entry for behavioral health services to youth served by four child-serving state agencies as well as self referrals.

Columbia Center for Youth

The Columbia Center for Youth will open in 2012. After some unexpected delays, Columbia will soon open and help decrease the population at Swanson, furthering our therapeutic model.

Probation Review

OJJ is conducting a Probation Review with technical assistance from the MacArthur Foundation, using the Hammond regional office. This review will take place throughout 2012 and will look into how our policies and operations support the goals of the probation office and OJJ as an agency.

BCCY perimeter upgrades

BCCY will see construction of new, upgraded perimeter fencing around the facility in 2012. This capital outlay project will help meet our mission by protecting the public, staff and youth at BCCY.

Juvenile Justice Indicator Data

In 2012, OJJ will begin to publish juvenile justice indicator data. This quarterly report will reflect trends and area-specific juvenile justice data.

Redesigned Quality Assurance Process

CQIS was charged with creating new QA process that focuses on outcome measures rather than process measures, as has been done in the past. Staff conducted extensive research on the components of an effective QA process, how to formulate outcome measures, etc. Numerous meetings were held on the standard design, definitions and the actual outcome measures. In December, 2011, the QA Standards for Secure Care were completed. Probation/Parole Standards are due for completion by the end of January. The new process will begin in 2012.

Summary

The major initiatives outlined here provide a roadmap for where we are going and show where we have been. It is fair to say that each member of the OJJ staff is touched by the programs or projects in this letter. As we continue to grow and learn as an agency, we also provide ever-better services to our clients, making us better able to meet our mission. As we mature as an agency, we also embrace best practices that improve our services and operations in every area. Our goal remains: working toward improved outcomes for the youth and families we serve.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary L. Livers

Dr. Mary L. Livers, PhD, MSW